

REMARKS

Applicants have amended Claim 1, 4, 11, and 17 and canceled Claims 2, 3, 12, 13, 18, and 19 and therefore, upon entry of this amendment, Claims 1, 4-11, 14-17, 20, and 21 are pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of the application.

Examiner indicated that the drawings filed on 15 October 2003 were accepted. Applicants note that formal drawings were also filed February 17, 2004.

Claim 3 was objected to because of informalities with respect to the word "as" after the word "provide." Specifically, Examiner suggested deleting the word "as" or inserting the word "it" before the word "as." Furthermore, Claim 3 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but Examiner indicated that the claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have deleted the word "as" and amended Claims 1 to include the limitations of Claim 3 (with Claim 3 canceled). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection for informalities be withdrawn and submit that Claim 1 is in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, the following remarks regarding distinctions over the prior art do not apply to the just-described claims.

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Claims 11 and 17 have also been amended to include limitations similar to that of objected to Claim 3. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 11 and 17 are also in proper form for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 17, 18, 20, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,454,500 to Kato et al. [herein referred to as "Kato"].

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent Claim 3 and, therefore as discussed above, is in proper form for allowance. Applicants further submit that Kato fails to teach or suggest "receiving a number of input signals, wherein at least one of the input signals is selectively sampled and stored; providing a first input signal selected from the input signals, including the at least one sampled and stored input signal" as recited in Claim 17.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 17 patentably distinguish over Kato and that corresponding dependent Claims 4, 5, 7-10, 20, and 21 are also distinguishable for at least the same reasons (Claims 2 and 18 have been canceled). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) of Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 17, 18, 20, and 21 be withdrawn.

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato. Applicants have canceled Claim 19.

Serial No. 10/687,468

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claim 19 be withdrawn.

Claims 6 and 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,760,721 to Inoue [herein referred to as "Inoue"].

Claim 6 is dependent upon Claim 1, which Applicants submit is in proper form for allowance as discussed above. Applicants further submit that Kato, alone or in combination with Inoue, fail to teach or suggest "means for providing the first input signal to the comparator, wherein providing includes selecting one from among a number of input signals to provide as the first input signal, with at least one of the input signals being selectively sampled and held and selectively provided as the first input signal" as recited in Claim 11.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 11 patentably distinguish over Kato in view of Inoue and that corresponding dependent Claims 6 and 14-16 are also distinguishable for at least the same reasons (Claims 12 and 13 have been canceled). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claims 6 and 11-16 be withdrawn.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 4-11, 14-17, 20, and 21 are in proper form for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested and a timely Notice of Allowance is solicited. If there are any questions regarding any aspect of the application, please call the undersigned at (949) 752-7040.

I certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on July 21, 2004.

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